

## see your health care provider if:

- You try an acne lotion or gel for six weeks, but your acne does not get better.
- You try an acne lotion or gel, but it makes your skin very dry, red, or sore, so you have to stop using it.
- You have acne with lots of red bumps or bumps with pus in them.
- Your bumps get very red, hard, and sore.
- Your acne bothers you a lot and makes you upset.



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# acne causes and prevention



**zits pimples blackheads**

## what is acne?

- Pimples, blackheads, and other bumps on your skin.
- May get on face, neck, shoulders, back, chest, or arms.
- Often starts when you are a teenager.
- Some people have just a few small bumps.
- Other people have lots of little bumps and big red bumps.

## what causes acne?

### Hormones

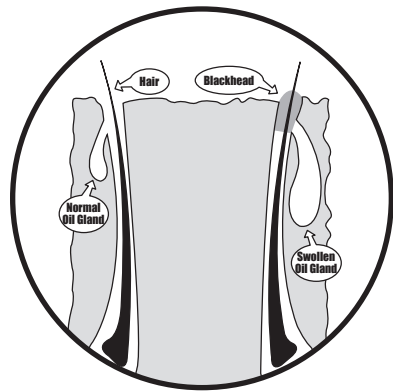
- When you start to grow up, your body starts to make hormones.
- Some of the hormones can make your oil glands make more oil.
- Too much oil can cause acne in some people.

### Heredity

If people in your family have had acne, you might, too.

### Plugged oil glands

- When your oil glands make lots of oil, it can mix with dead skin cells.
- The oil and dead skin cells can plug up the opening to the oil gland.
- This makes whiteheads and blackheads.
- Germs may get into the plugged up oil gland. This can make a pimple or cyst that is red and swollen. It may hurt, too.



## what does not cause acne?

- Food and drinks have not been shown to cause acne. If you think certain foods or drinks make your acne worse, avoid them in your diet.
- You can't catch acne from someone else.

## what can I do about acne?

- Wash your skin gently two times a day with mild soap and warm water and pat dry.
- Wash your hair often so it does not get oily. Use a mild shampoo and warm water.
- Try an acne lotion or gel with benzoyl peroxide.
  - Start with a 2.5 or 5% lotion or gel. Use it one time a day.
  - If it doesn't make your skin too dry, red, or sore after you use it for one week, use it two times a day.
  - If your acne gets better—great! Keep using the lotion or gel every day.
  - If your acne does not get better, try a 10% lotion or gel. Start with one time a day. If it does not make your skin too dry, red, or sore after one week, use it two times a day.
- Try an acne lotion or gel with salicylic acid. You can try it one time a day for a week. If it does not make your skin too dry, red, or sore, you can use it two times a day.
- Don't use acne products with benzoyl peroxide and salicylic acid at the same time. It can make your skin very dry and sore.



**Remember, you may have to use acne products every day for three to six weeks before the acne gets better.**

- Acne often gets better as you get older. Treatment helps you to have fewer acne scars.
- If you shave:
  - Try an electric razor.
  - If you use a safety razor, wash your face with mild soap and warm water first. This will make the hair softer.
  - Use a sharp blade.
  - Shave as lightly as you can.
- If you use make-up, use products that are “oil-free” or “noncomedogenic.”

## what makes acne worse?

- Don't squeeze bumps. It can hurt the skin around the bump and make it worse.
- Don't scrub your skin real hard.
- Things that rub on the skin, like hats and headbands, can make acne worse.
- Some kinds of make-up and hair products can make acne worse. Products with oil or chemicals in them can irritate your skin.
- Some medicines may make acne worse. Ask your health care provider about any medicines you may be taking.
- If you are a young woman, acne may get worse in the week before your period.
- Stress and being nervous can make acne worse.

